

**Remarks by Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**at the Jewish Federation “Town Hall”**

**Temple Beth Am**  
**August 17, 2003**

Good morning.

I want to thank you for inviting me to be here with you today at Temple Beth Am. I have known Rabbi Jacob Pressman, and his wife Marjorie, for many years, and I am delighted to be here.

As many of you know, I have now been representing this community in Congress for almost 29 years. And while the lines of the district change from time to time – I am now representing the 30<sup>th</sup> Congressional district – the heart of the district has always been the Jewish community. This district now includes not only the Westside, but also areas of the West Valley and the Conejo Valley, where many of the children of the families I represented here on the Westside are now starting families of their own.

I was asked to speak today on the topic of domestic issues and the Jewish community. With international issues dominating the national spotlight for the past few years, I am glad to have the opportunity to get back

to this very important subject, because these are issues that effect us every day, and because this Administration and this Congress have pursued a broad, right-wing domestic agenda with which I strongly disagree.

This raises a very interesting point. While many people in the Jewish community have embraced President Bush's policies towards Israel and the Middle East, we must remember that it is still the Democratic party that best represents our core Jewish values: tzedakah, social justice, and tikkun olam.

It was just a few years ago that Washington was debating how best to use a \$300 billion surplus. We could have shored up Social Security, added a real prescription drug benefit to Medicare, and funded education to get more qualified people into teaching and nursing.

Instead we are facing record deficits of between \$400 billion and \$500 billion over the next few years, and a deteriorating economic situation.

Since President Bush took office:

- Over 3 million jobs have been lost nationally, and the unemployment rate is over 6%;

- We have lost nearly 300,000 jobs in California and have over 1 million unemployed workers;
- Over 2 million unemployed workers nationally have exhausted their benefits.

The Bush Administration blames this deteriorating fiscal condition on our military deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the most significant contributions to the budget deficit are the Republican's tax cuts, which have benefited the wealthiest Americans without providing any real stimulus to the economy. In fact, 49% of California taxpayers will get a cut of less than \$100 this year; and by 2006, 87% will get a tax break of less than \$100.

Many observers – notably Princeton economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman – have hypothesized that the Republican tax cuts are a backdoor attempt to shrink the size of the federal government by starving it of revenue. The reasoning goes like this: in order to pay for the tax cuts, the government needs to borrow hundreds of billions of dollars from the Social Security and Medicare trust funds, which are currently running surpluses while more workers are paying in than retirees are receiving. With the retirement of baby boomers beginning in the next few

years, however, the trust funds will run out of money. The federal government will be unable to sustain its spending, forcing it to drastically reduce important domestic programs and, ultimately, to fundamentally alter Social Security and Medicare.

So let me be clear about what is going on in Washington. At a time when millions of Americans are losing their jobs, the Bush Administration is facilitating a massive transfer of wealth in the form of nearly \$2 trillion in tax cuts that primarily benefit the rich. As a result of these tax cuts, the government is forced to borrow out of the Social Security trust fund to finance essential government services. And the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress have no plans – and no intentions – to ever repay the money. This is not only fiscally irresponsible, but puts a tremendous financial burden on the next generation. This is not what our Jewish values teach us to do.

I am watching the effects of this Administration's policies from a rather unique perspective. Since 1997, I have been the top Democratic member of the House Government Reform Committee, which is responsible for oversight of the executive branch. Not surprisingly, the Republican

majority has shown no interest in investigating the Bush Administration's domestic policies. So I have used my staff to look into a number of issues on which I believe Congress should be focusing.

I want to share with you the findings of a report issued by my staff last week, which I think illustrates the Bush Administration's right-wing social agenda and sets a very dangerous precedent.

Since the spring of 2001, I have heard reports of the Bush Administration distorting science to push an ideological and political agenda. So earlier this year, I asked my staff to investigate these incidents in a comprehensive way. What the staff found was an unprecedented effort by this Administration to allow politics to interfere with science. The report cites more than twenty examples of this Administration manipulating scientific research, controlling the advice given by scientific advisory committees, and distorting the scientific information given to policymakers and the public.

These examples cross a wide spectrum of issues ranging from abstinence education, stem cell research, and the unproven link between

abortion and breast cancer, to workplace safety and the impact of human activities on global climate change, Yellowstone National Park or the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (see **Examples – attached**).

But all of these issues share one of two common things: They are either issues that have important right-wing constituencies that support the President; or they have significant economic consequences for large corporations that support the President.

There should be a clear line between the work of scientists and that of policymakers. Unfortunately, this Administration has blurred those lines to mask its true ideological agenda, and science – and future generations – will pay the price.

There are many more issues that I'm sure you'd like to discuss. So let me conclude my remarks by thanking you again for being here with me this morning and inviting you to please visit my website at [www.waxman.house.gov](http://www.waxman.house.gov), where you can read more about what I am working on in Washington. I would be happy to answer your questions.

## Schedule for Henry Waxman

### August 17, 2003 (Sunday)

10:00am Jewish Federation town hall @ Temple Beth Am re: domestic Jewish issues. Contact: Johanna and Elana (323) 761-8145. Temple address and phone: 1039 S. La Cienega (310) 652-7353.

Draft Statement attached. Rachel (818) 445-8436 and Alexis (310) 991-5881 will meet you at the Temple.

5:00p Carl Albert's daughter's wedding in LA

### August 18, 2003 (Monday)

10:00a Joe Tarantino, Liberty Pharmaceuticals/Huntington Beach re: US gov's role in purchase of pharmaceuticals from small companies in D.O. (714) 843-9387.

11:00a Telephone interview with Barton Reppert, Atlantic Monthly, for his proposal to do a story on your politics and science report. We will call Mr. Reppert at (301) 330-4077.

4:00p American Hellenic Council in D.O. Contact: Kelly Vlahakis (323) 651-3507, cell: (310) 403-4534.

### August 19, 2003 (Tuesday)

8:00a Breakfast with Arnon Adar at Hillcrest.

10:00a Filming in D.O. by moveon.org for documentary about Bush Administration's reasons for going to war. Producers Robert Greenwald and Kate McCardle (310) 204-0404. [They asked for one hour but I told them 30 minutes].

5:30p FYI: West Hollywood Democratic Club "Democrat of the Year" award to Senator Barbara Boxer. 5:30 p.m. reception @ Hyatt on Sunset Blvd. followed by awards ceremony at 6:30 pm. Contact: Donald (310) 657-1083.

### August 20, 2003 (Wednesday)

12:00p Stamps.com lunch in private dining room @ L.A. Farm, 3000 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica. Stamps contact: Seth Weisberg (310) 581-7252.